

**Living  
It Up**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**Year Ending 31st December 2023**

Charity Registration Number - 1199155

St Cuthberts Hall, Newnham Street, Bedford, MK40 3JR

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# ORGANISATION PROFILE

## Organisation History

Living It Up was originally founded in 2009 as a Community Group. We became a CIC (Community Interest Company) in 2016 and gained Charitable Status (CIO) 31st May 2022. A CIO is a legal structure regulated by the Charity Commission that was introduced to help simplify the process for setting up a charity.

Living It Up began fully operating as a charity on 1st January 2023.



## Trustees

- Our Trustees are:
- Michael Collett - Chair
- Rachael Cavanagh - Treasurer (stood down December 2023)
- Vicki Airs
- Gareth Wright
- Oliver Monks
- Sarah Neyland
- Sarah Fletcher
- Sue Reed (stood down February 2023)

## About our Trustees

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. They can however recover expenses incurred directly as a result of their role.

There has to be a minimum of 4 serving trustees.

Trustees are recruited to ensure a diversity of relevant skills and expertise needed for effective governance of the charity. They must complete a skills audit and attend a meeting as an observer. We will always have at least 1 serving trustee who uses our services.

We'd welcome expressions of interests from potential new trustees!

# TRUSTEE INDUCTION AND TRAINING

## Training

Training is routinely and regularly offered to all trustees, both new and existing.

## Induction

All trustees must complete an organisational induction. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Confirming reading of conflict of interest policy
- Signed declaration of interests

## Structure Chart

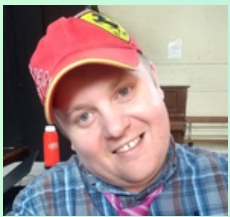
Please see the following page for our structure chart.



# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



Mike Collett  
Chair of Trustees



Gareth Wright  
Trustee



Vicki Airs  
Trustee



Sarah Fletcher  
Trustee



Sarah Neyland  
Trustee



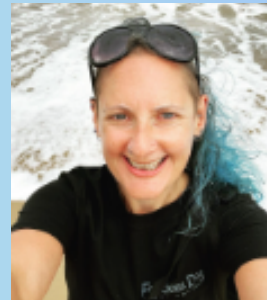
Oli Monks  
Trustee



Rachael Cavanagh  
Trustee /Treasurer



Claire Crawford-Smith  
Co-CEO



Fizz Heseltine  
Co-CEO



Carly Morris  
Operations Manager



PAC Staff and  
Volunteers



Gig Buddies Staff  
and Volunteers



Gr8 Mates Staff  
and Volunteers



Events Staff and  
Volunteers



Hall Staff



# WHAT WE DO

Living It Up provides social and educational opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and autism in and around Bedfordshire.

## OUR CHARITABLE OBJECTS

The objects of Living It Up CIO are:

The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among vulnerable adults and children, with a physical or learning disability or autism who are socially excluded on the grounds of their disability, by providing:

1. Opportunities to learn new skills, education and training that are designed to assist them to integrate into society;
2. Social and recreational facilities and events involving the local community.



# ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

We achieved the following in 2023:

## Performing Arts Centre

- We supported 65 learners in 2023
- We supported 6 volunteers in 2023

## Gig Buddies

- We recruited and trained 8 new volunteers
- We supported 45 participants
- We supported 26 volunteers
- We have supported 20 pairs of matched buddies
- An average of 720 hours of Gig Buddies matched pairs going out a year
- An average of 48 hours per participant supported at monthly socials a year



## Gr8 Mates

- We supported 31 members
- We did not have any volunteers
- An average of 18 hours per member supported at bi-monthly socials a year

## Events

- We recruited and trained 6 new volunteers
- We supported 295 members at our events
- We supported 25 Volunteers
- An average of 36 hours per member supported at our bi-monthly parties

## St Cuthberts Hall

- An average of 8 hours a week the hall is hired out to regular community groups
- 470 hours hired out in total

# ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES IN THE COMING YEAR

For year ending 2024 we hope to achieve the following:

## Performing Arts Centre

- Recruit additional experts to increase range of opportunities
- Have facilities to offer services to more learners
- Improve and evolve shop project

## Gig Buddies

- Recruit and train more volunteers
- Continue to support the advisory board to plan monthly socials
- Continue to support existing pairs of matched buddies

## Gr8 Mates

- Establish LGBTQ+ element of this service, if wanted by our members
- Recruit and train more volunteers
- Find funding for increased staffing hours
- Recruit more female members

## Events

- Find and recruit more volunteers
- Hold regular bi-monthly events

## St Cuthberts Hall

- Market as a community hall/community centre
- Establish as an independent venue





# IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES

This year we have noted the following key impacts on the people that we work with:

## Performing Arts Centre

- Our theatre show 'Alice in Murderland' in January 2023 was a huge success and got a 5 star review from the Bedford Independent. Our learners gain a massive amount of confidence and enjoyment in showcasing their drama skills to the local community.

## Gig Buddies

- We have successfully partnered with Bedford Town Football Club to get free Gig Buddy tickets for all the home matches.
- We have continued to offer monthly socials over a range of activities. The uptake for this has grown dramatically.

## Gr8 Mates

- Supporting a number of budding relationships to develop.
- Continuing to offer bi-monthly events.

## Events

- We have now fully returned to our regular bi-monthly events, following the global pandemic. This has had a hugely beneficial impact on our members' wellbeing, confidence and mental health .

## St Cuthberts Hall

- We commenced the work needed to launch the hall as an Independent Music Venue.

